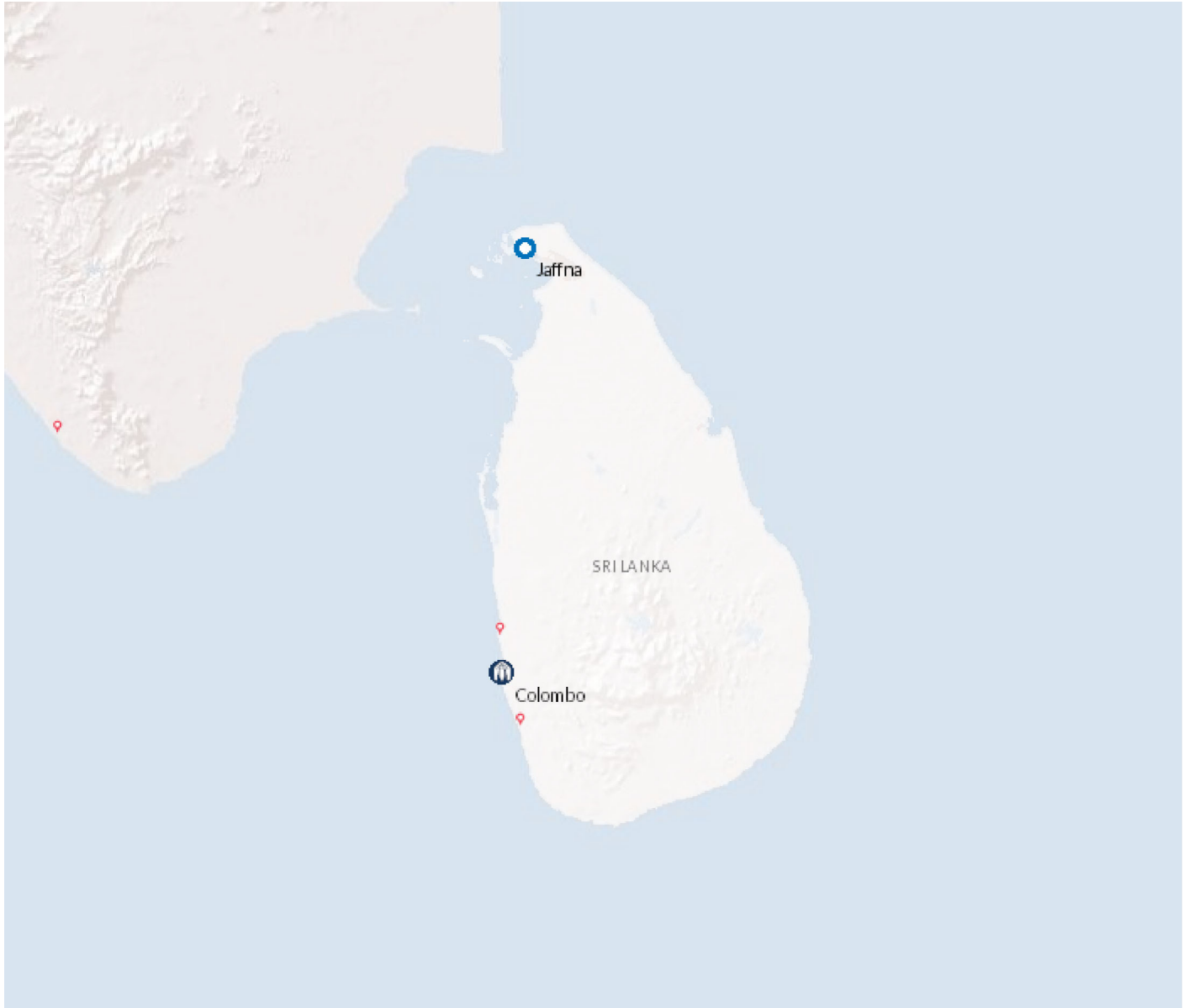




## Operation: Sri Lanka

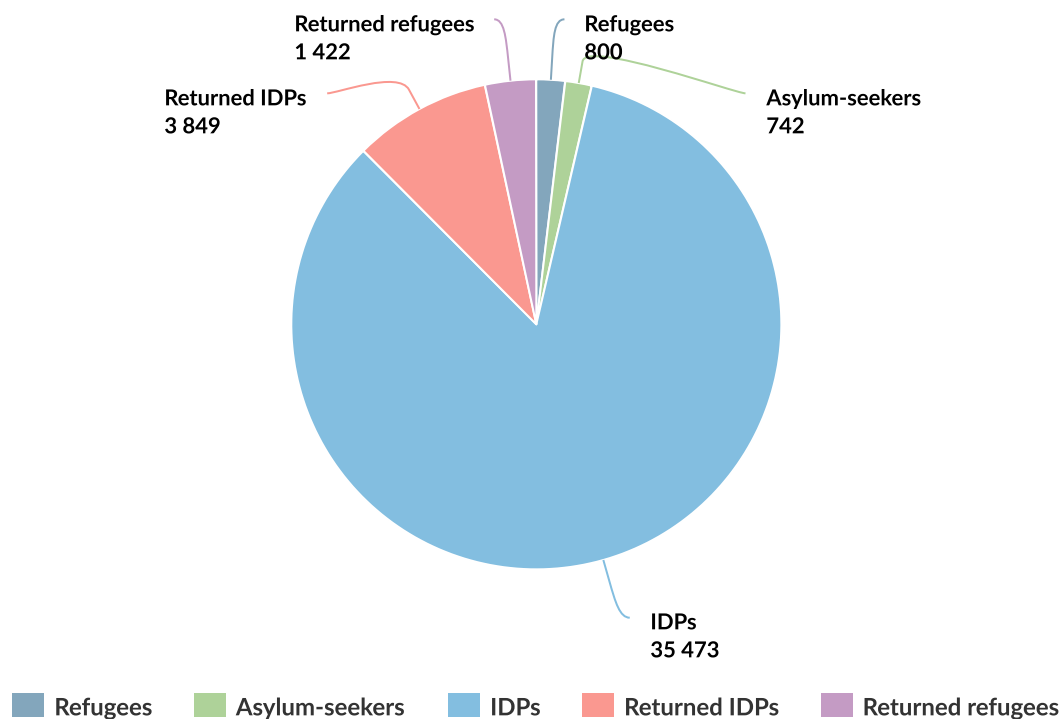


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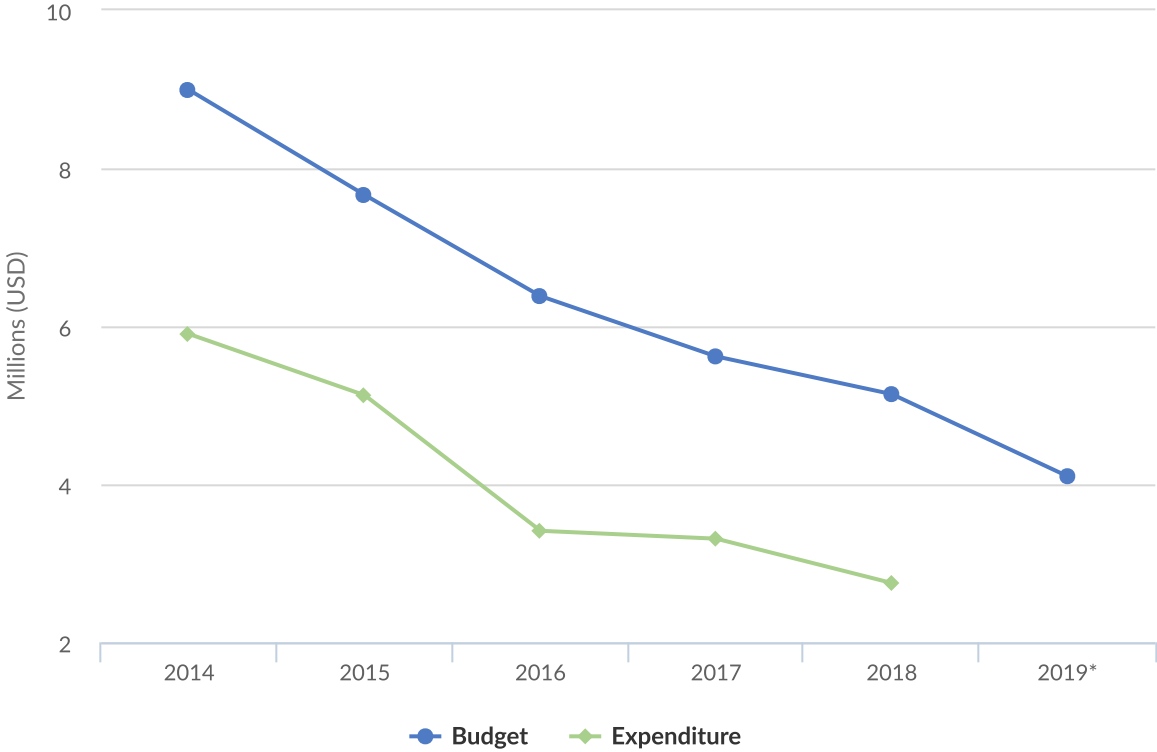
# People of Concern

DECREASE IN  
**1%** 2018

2018	42,286
2017	42,766
2016	54,409



# Budgets and Expenditure for Sri Lanka



## Operational context

Refugees and asylum-seekers enjoyed a relatively stable environment and access to basic protection and services in Sri Lanka in 2018. UNHCR maintained relations with key government counterparts through bi-lateral and technical meetings and expanded training and sensitization activities as a means of raising awareness and enhancing the capacity of government officials, service providers, targeted groups and the general public.

The Government continued to show its commitment to engage with the United Nations, development partners and donors to find solutions for UNHCR's people of concern, especially IDPs and returning Sri Lankan refugees. As part of its regular advocacy and awareness raising, UNHCR continued to capacitate government stakeholders and law enforcement personnel on international refugee protection.

## Population trends

At year-end, the total number of people of concern in Sri Lanka stood at some 42,250, including 800 refugees, 740 asylum-seekers, 1,380 refugee returnees, 35,470 IDPs and 3,850 IDP returnees.

The number of newly arriving asylum-seekers decreased by 5% compared to the previous year. Close to 440 people were registered with UNHCR in 2018, a slight decrease from 2017, originating from 14 different countries with the majority (86%) from Pakistan.

## Key achievements

In 2018, UNHCR conducted registration, documentation and RSD, as well as resettlement as a durable solution. There were no instances of arbitrary arrests, detention or deportation/refoulement. Partnership with relevant Government entities continued through regular technical meetings and via ad-hoc consultations. As a result, the overall protection environment remained stable with asylum-seekers and refugees enjoying basic protection and receiving more timely services.

The operation focused on training and sensitization activities as a means of raising awareness and enhancing the capacity of government officials, service providers, targeted groups and the general public. In the absence of a national asylum/refugee policy or legal framework, UNHCR continued building its RSD capacity and resettlement processing, resulting in, relatively, timely RSD and a solid number of resettlement submissions. UNHCR pursued child protection/BID and education objectives with all refugee children attending primary education and with the conclusion of BIAs/BIDs for most of the UASC cases. Advocacy on access to public schools and access to work for refugee and asylum-seeker populations continued throughout the year.

## Unmet needs

Based on policy and on resource constraints only refugees are provided with financial assistance, albeit limited. The situation of asylum-seekers continues to be difficult as they face long waiting periods (around one and a half years) for their first instance RSD interview, in an environment where they have no right to work and are dependent on support.

While UNHCR attempted to provide assistance to vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers, the assistance remained limited. The lack of access to public education for all children remains of great concern. Refugee children of secondary education age and all asylum seeking children are not assisted to meet their education needs and remain, to a large extent, outside the formal educational environment.

While UNHCR was able to provide assistance to all repatriating refugees upon arrival, its capacity to support a more conducive return environment in the places of origin was limited by the funding shortfall. Despite the

Government's implementation of significant infrastructure projects over the past few years, substantial gaps remain that hinder the sustainability of return.

(<http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/24170/edit>)

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